

## Message Text

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46

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 AID-20 IO-13 SCSE-00 SCA-01 SR-02

ORM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 /120 W

----- 124996

R 040707 Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4094

UNCLAS SAIGON 11987

E. O. 11652 : N/ A

TAGS PINS, PINT, VS, US

SUBJECT: SENATOR KENNEDY' S SPEECH ON CIVILIAN PRISONERS

REF: SECSTATE 128634

1. THE LETTER REFERRED TO BY SENATOR KENNEDY WAS HANDED TO MR. JERRY M. TINKER OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF DURING TINKER' S VISIT TO VIETNAM LAST MARCH. WE BELIEVE THE CHARGE IT TAT IT " OFFICIALLY DENIED PERMISSION" FOR TINKER TO VISIT PRISONS IS NOT WARRANTED. THE FACTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

2. TINKER ARRIVED FRIDAY MARCH 9 WITH OTHER SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS. HE MENTIONED HIS INTEREST IN VISITING PRISONS DURING A MARCH 10 EMBASSY MEETING. AT THAT TIME EMBASSY OFFICERS COMMENTED THAT PERMISSION FOR SUCH A VISIT WOULD TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME GUV# SENSITIVITY OF THE GVN, AND IN BE # MOST GOVERNMENTS,

TOWARD FOREIGN INSPECTIONS OF THEIR DETENTION FACILITIES.

3. ON FRIDAY MARCH 16 THE EMBASSY RECEIVED A LETTER FROM TINKER DATED MARCH 15 IN WHICH TINKER ASKED THE EMBASSY TO ARRANGE A VISIT TO A " NEARBY SAIGON CIVILIAN PRISON FACILITY WHERE PERSONS CHARGED WITH POLITICAL OR " COMMUNIST CRIMES" ARE CURRENTLY BEING HELD". TINKER' S LETTER ALSO REQUESTED ANSWERS TO CERTAIN  
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QUESTIONS RELATED TO PRISONERS AND PRISON CONDITIONS.

4. PERMISSION TO VISIT A PRISON WAS NOT RPT NOT DENIED MR. TINKER, BUT THE SHORTNESS OF TIME MADE THIS IMPOSSIBLE. MR. TINKER'S DEPARTURE DATE WAS TUESDAY MARCH 20, AND A WEEKEND INTERVENED MARCH 17-18 WHEN GVN OFFICES WERE CLOSED PRECLUDING FOLLOW-THROUGH.

AMBASSADOR BUNKER NOTED THE DIFFICULTY IN A LETTER HANDED TO MR. TINKER MARCH 19 ( THE LETTER MENTIONED BY SENATOR KENNEDY).

5. THE TEXT OF AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S MARCH 19 LETTER FOLLOWS:  
BEGIN TEXT:

----- THE EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE YOU SHORTLY WITH THE STATEMENT YOU REQUESTED IN YOUR LETTER OF MARCH 15 WITH REGARD TO CIVILIANS IMPRISONED IN SOUTH VIET- NAM AND THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF CIVILIAN PRISONS.

6. IN VIEW OF THE IMMINENCE OF YOUR DEPARTURE WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO SECURE THE PERMISSION YOU REQUESTED TO VISIT A SAIGON CIVILIAN PRISON FACILITY. END TEXT.

7. THE TEXTS OF TINKER'S MARCH 15 LETTER AND THE EMBASSY'S APRIL 3 ANSWER TO HIS LIST OF QUESTIONS ARE BEING POUCHED TO EA/ VN. ALSO POUCHED AS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST ARE A LETTER FROM TINKER OF APRIL 18 REQUESTING FURTHER INFORMATION AND THE EMBASSY'S REPLY OF MAY 11.

8. COMMENT:

----- FOLLOWING PRESIDENT THIEU'S STATEMENT IN THE U. S. ACCEPTING THE CONCEPT OF PRISON VISITS, A SOMEWHAT MORE LIBERAL POLICY SEEMS TO BE FORTHCOMING FROM THE GVN ON THIS MATTER. A TOUR TO CON SON ISLAND IS NOW BEING ARRANGED FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN SAIGON, FOR EXAMPLE. THE GVN'S REACTION TO INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS IS STILL UNCLEAR; AMPLE LEAD TIME REMAINS ADVISABLE.

9. FOR FURTHER BACKGROUND, WE SUGGEST DEPARTMENT CONTACT MR. M. CHARLES HILL, RECENTLY ASSIGNED TO SAIGON AND NOW IN CU. MR. RAY A. MEYER, A POST- CEASEFIRE TDY FSO IN L WHO HAS NOW RETURNED TO BRUSSELS, MIGHT ALSO BE CONTACTED.  
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NOTE BY OC/ T: PARA 2 LINE 5 # AS RECEIVED, WILL BE SERVICED UPON REQUEST

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* UNCLASSIFIED

## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PINS, PINT, US, VS, PINT  
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